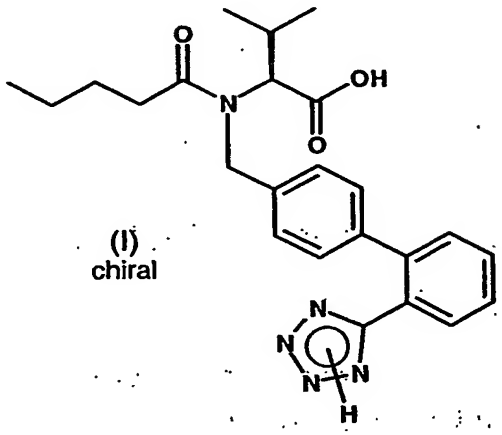
What is claimed is:

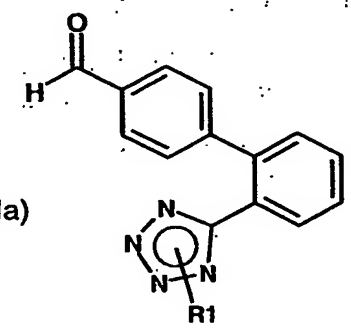
1. A process for the manufacture of the compound of formula (I)



(I)
chiral

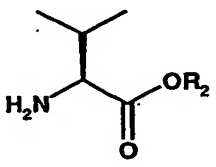
or a salt thereof, comprising

(a) reacting a compound of formula (II a)



(IIa)

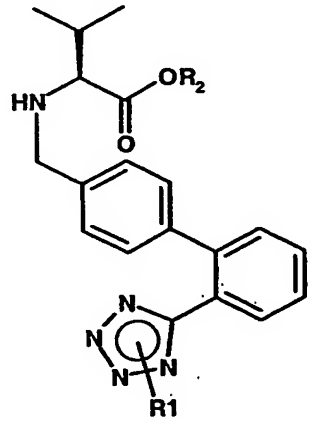
or a salt thereof, wherein R_1 is hydrogen or a tetrazole protecting group, with a compound of formula



(IIb)
chiral

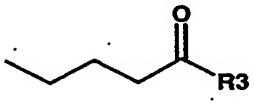
or a salt thereof, wherein R_2 represents hydrogen or a carboxy protecting group, under the conditions of a reductive amination; and

(b) acylating a resulting compound of formula (II c)



(IIc)
chiral

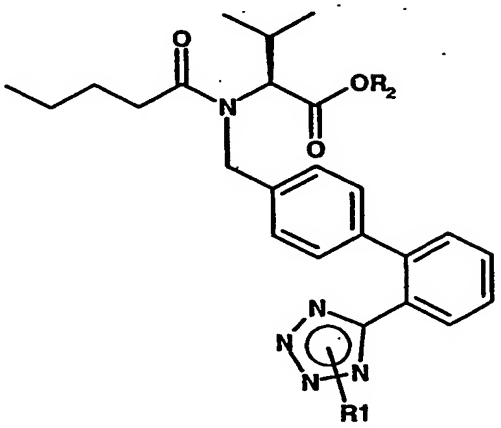
or a salt thereof with a compound of formula (II d)



(IId)

wherein R_3 is an activating group; and,

(c) if R_1 and/or R_2 are different form hydrogen, removing the protecting group(s) in a resulting compound of formula (II e)



(IIe)
chiral

or a salt thereof; and

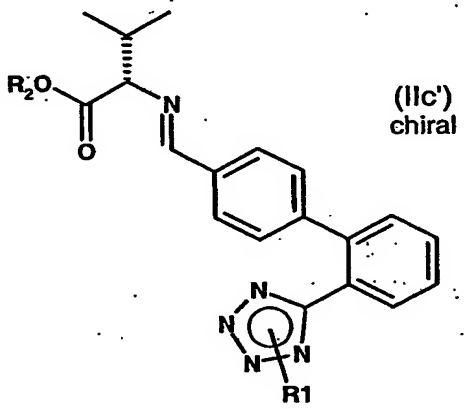
(d) isolating a resulting compound of formula (I) or a salt thereof; and, if desired, converting a resulting free acid of formula (I) into a salt thereof or converting a resulting salt

of a compound of formula (I) into the free acid of formula (I) or converting a resulting salt of a compound of formula (I) into a different salt.

2. The process according to claim 1, wherein in compounds of formulae (II a), (II b), (II c), and (II e) R_1 represents hydrogen and R_2 represents hydrogen and wherein in compounds of formula (II d) R_3 represents halogen.

3. The process according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the reductive amination is carried out in the presence of a reducing agent such as a borohydride, which may also be in complexed form, or hydrogen or a hydrogen donor both in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst.

4. The process according to claim 1 or 2, wherein step (a) is carried out by first forming an imine of formula

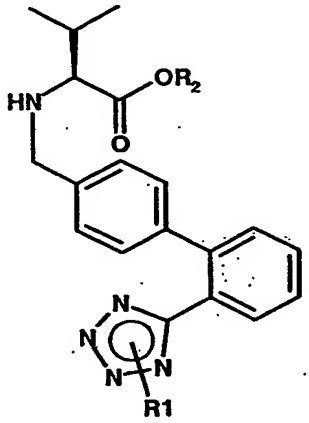


(IIc')
chiral

by condensing compounds of formulae (II a) and (II b) and by removing water and then followed by reducing a compound of formula (IIc') in the presence of a reducing agent.

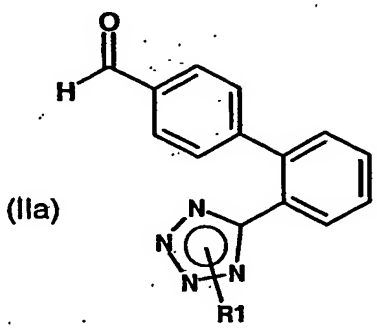
5. The process according to claim 1 or 2, wherein step (b) is carried out by first adding a compound of formula (II d) to a compound of formula (II c) and then slowly adding a sub-stoichiometric amount of a base in relation to the compound of formula (II d).

6. A process for the manufacture of a compound of formula



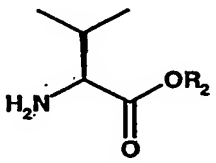
(IIc)
chiral

wherein R_1 represents hydrogen or a tetrazole protecting group and R_2 represents hydrogen or a carboxy protecting group,
comprising reacting a compound of formula (II a):



(IIa)

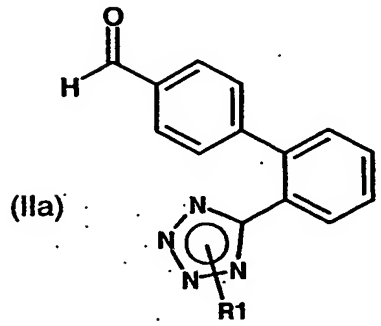
or a salt thereof, wherein R_1 is hydrogen or a tetrazole protecting group, with a compound of formula



(IIb)
chiral

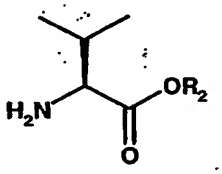
or a salt thereof, wherein R_2 represents hydrogen or a carboxy protecting group, under the conditions of a reductive amination.

7. A process according to claim 6, comprising reacting a compound of formula (II a)



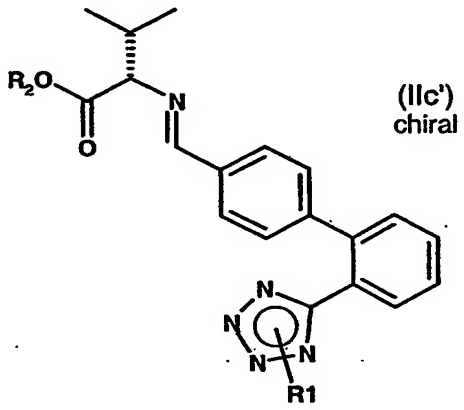
(IIa)

or a salt thereof, wherein R_1 is hydrogen or a tetrazole protecting group, with a compound of formula



(IIb)
chiral

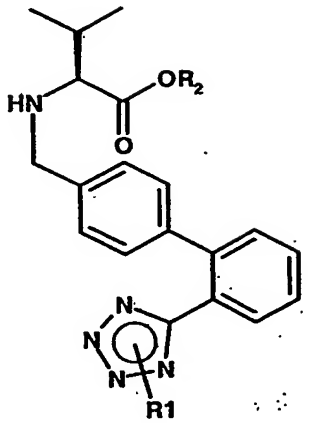
or a salt thereof, wherein R_2 represents hydrogen or a carboxy protecting group, while eliminating water, and reducing a resulting compound of formula (II c')



(IIc')
chiral

in the presence of a reducing agent.

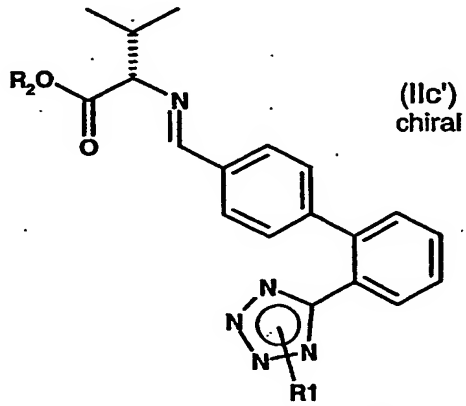
8. Acompound of formula



(IIc)
chiral

wherein R_1 is hydrogen or a tetrazole protecting group and R_2 is hydrogen or a carboxy protecting group, excluding a compound of formula (II c) wherein R_1 is ethyl and R_2 is trityl.

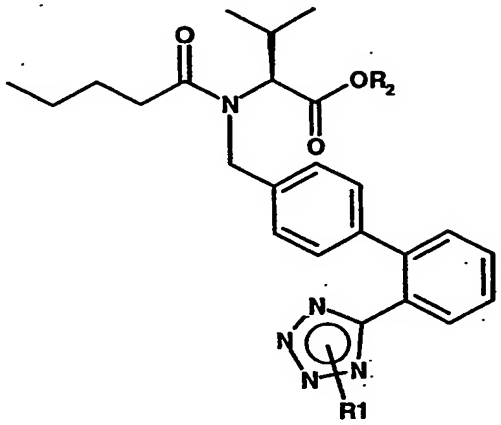
9. A compound of formula



(IIc')
chiral

wherein R_1 is hydrogen or a tetrazole protecting group and R_2 is hydrogen or a carboxy protecting group.

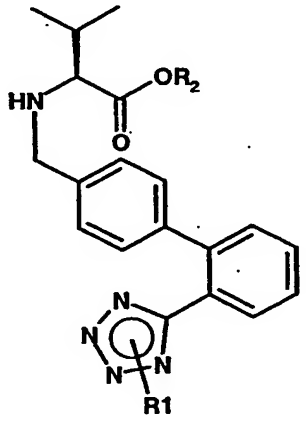
10. A process for the manufacture of a compound of formula



(IIe)
chiral

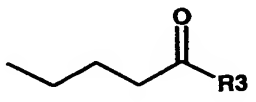
wherein R_1 represents hydrogen or a tetrazole protecting group and R_2 represents hydrogen or a carboxy protecting group,

comprising acylating a resulting compound of formula (II c)



(IIc)
chiral

or a salt thereof with a compound of formula (II d)



(IId)

wherein R_3 is an activating group.